

THREE IN WHITE

A Morality Play in One Act

BY
HAROLD GODDARD

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By HAROLD C. GODDARD

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PERSONS*

A FIGURE IN BLACK

A SUFFRAGIST

A SUFFRAGETTE

A PHILOSOPHER

A PAINTER

PERSONS OF THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY.

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| A Mill Girl | } | first seen as Three Unborn Souls |
| A Mother | | |
| A Lady of Leisure | | |

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Monotony | Little Odd Jobs | |
| Bad Air | Baking | Purse |
| Little Fatigue | Dirty Dishes | Fashion |
| Dance Hall | Sickness | Bridge |
| Cheap Theatre | Mumps | Silly Novel |
| Capital | Measles | Inane Play |
| | Whooping Cough | Dinner |
| Tom | Chicken Pox | Senseless Shopping |
| Blanche | Tummy Ache | Tango |
| Johnnie | Ordinary Cold | Charity |
| Alice | Newspaper | Literary Babble |
| Dust | Lecture | Vacation |
| Broom | Piano | Motor Car |
| Front Door Bell | Book | Boredom |
| Back Door Bell | Another Book | |
| Ironing | Servant Problem | Gnomes |
| Mending | | |

*See "Foreword" as to the number of actors necessary for the production of this play.

The parts of the Figure in Black and the Suffragist are to be taken by the same actress.

See *note* at the foot of page 7 with regard to the Suffragette.

THE SCENE

No scenery is necessary for the presentation of this play. If any is used, it should represent an open country place with trees and shrubbery at the back.

FOREWORD

The following play may be presented in several different ways, according to the size of the stage, the number of actors, and other resources available.

(1) The play within the play may be presented, as the text suggests, with real actors for all the parts (most of them children), in which case each one, by costume or by some symbolic object that he carries, makes clear to the eye the idea which he represents, and actually speaks the lines assigned to him. *This is distinctly the most desirable arrangement.*

(2) The play within the play may be presented as under (1) except that The Figure in Black speaks the lines of the other characters.

(3) The play within the play may be presented as under (1) except that a Voice behind the scene speaks the lines of the actors in that play.

(4) The play within the play may be presented as a puppet show, in which case symbolic objects (as, e. g., a Broom, a Bell, a Fashion Plate, a Playing Card), or in a few instances figures stuffed to represent human beings (as, e. g., Cheap Theatre, Boredom, Monotony) take the place of real actors, The Figure in Black, the stage manager of the puppet show, speaking the lines and tying the puppets to the Mill Girl, the Mother, and the Lady of Leisure (all three of which parts, in any arrangement of the play, are to be taken by real actresses).

(5) The play within the play may be presented as under (4) except that a Voice behind the scene, instead of The Figure in Black, speaks the lines of the puppets.

(6) The play within the play may be presented as a puppet show but in certain cases real actors may be the puppets (assuming a certain stiffness of attitude and gesture). If this arrangement is the one selected, the puppets in question may either recite their own lines or have them recited for them by The Figure in Black or the Voice. The following are the puppets which real actors should represent: Monotony, Bad Air, Dance Hall, Cheap Theatre, Capital, Tom, Blanche, Johnnie, Alice, Sickness, Boredom, Servant Problem (and perhaps Charity and Literary Babble).

It is obvious also that the scale of the production may be reduced by cutting out from the second and third parts of the play within the play certain of the characters. Such omissions should be made judiciously, however, so as not seriously to impair the real significance of the drama.

Three In White

[Enter a Suffragist and a Suffragette.* Each carries a banner: "Votes for Women." They are arguing warmly.]

The Suffragist is a bright-faced young woman, graceful and eager in manner, simple in her attire. The Suffragette on the contrary is awkward and unattractive. Her tone is petulant, her movements and gestures nervous and impatient, her dress eccentric. She carries, in addition to her banner, an immense roll of paper much larger than herself, while over her arm is slung a bag bulging with yellow hand-bills.]

SUFFRAGIST

.

All three will be the better for it then:
The children, and the women, and the men.

SUFFRAGETTE

Oh botheration on your dull inanity
About "the life and unlift of humanity!"
The Vote! It is *the Vote* we want. I wish you
Would stick more closely to the central issue.

SUFFRAGIST

True; 'tis the vote we want. Why do we want it?

SUFFRAGETTE

It is our right, and so the men must grant it.

SUFFRAGIST

Just there I enter strenuous objection;
We want it as a step toward the perfection

*These terms are used merely in the most general way to indicate, the first a woman with the true, the second a woman with a false, attitude toward suffrage. If in the case of any particular audience the term "Suffragette" is likely to give offence or carry an implication other than the one just suggested, the terms "First Suffragist" and "Second Suffragist" may be substituted for those in the text.

Of the world's life. We want it as a key
 To unlock woman's prison, and set free
 Her spirit on new errands of creation
 Which, working through her children, to the nation
 Shall bring a day of new emancipation.

SUFFRAGETTE

I really think you're talking through your hat.
 I say "the vote" and let it go at that.

SUFFRAGIST

You say "the Vote," *the Vote for its own sake.*
 I say "the vote" for *what the vote will make.*
 Look at the words on your own banner! Note:
 The vote for woman, not woman for the vote.

SUFFRAGETTE

Talk on! Meanwhile *I'll sow seed from this bag;*
 [She scatters a handfull of yellow bills.]
 Seek signatures for this; and wave my flag.

SUFFRAGIST

But banners and petitions and statistics
 Are all in vain if we are "suffrage mystics"
 And fool ourselves by worshipping a *word.*
 As means these things are good, as ends absurd.

SUFFRAGETTE

Your fine distinctions really make me dizzy.
 I'm glad to say my hands and feet are busy
 With things to *do.* I have no time to *ponder . . .*
 Look! do you see those two men coming yonder?
 'T would be a thousand pities if I lost 'em.
 I'll step behind a tree and then accost 'em.

[The Suffragette darts out. The Suffragist pauses, looking off in the direction from which the two men are coming. After a moment of meditation a sudden thought strikes her, and with a smile she goes quietly off.]

A Painter and a Philosopher stroll in.

The Painter is a sentimental creature with high-pitched voice, his pale brow encircled with clusters of yellow ringlets. He is joppishly dressed. Under his right arm he carries an easel and fresh canvas; while on the thumb of his other hand is a palette daubed with colors that flash brilliantly in the air as he gesticulates.

The Philosopher is in every way a foil to his younger companion; soberly dressed, grave, thoughtful, quiet, with gentle voice and kindly smile.]

PAINTER

The Woman Question! O my friend, how could you?
I came out to enjoy the air. So would you,
In Christian charity, kindly desist
From raising questions that do not exist?
The Woman Question! Oh! *The Woman Question!*
Half of it's gush, the other half pure fustian!

PHILOSOPHER

I though so once. I think so now no longer;
Not a month passes but my faith grows stronger . . .

PAINTER

You! No! Well, well, you do keep in the swim.
You don't say *you* believe in votes for wom— . . .

PHILOSOPHER

I do not say I do. But I will say
I find myself drawn forcibly that way.
The woman question, though, I'd have you note,
Involves far deeper matters than the vote:
Problems profound in manifold variety
Of woman's place and function in society.
He only who perceives these things aright
Can view the suffrage question in true light.
The franchise is a means and not an end!
Yet many a suffragist seems to contend,
If only with a ballot you'd adorn her
The golden age would walk around the corner.

PAINTER

Oh, cut it out! I came to get the air!
 Let me wind up the matter with this prayer:
 The Lord deliver me from taxes, debts,
 Mad dogs, bad eggs, sour cream, and suffragettes!

[Enter the Suffragette. Fountain pen in hand, she rushes up to the Painter and the Philosopher for their signatures.]

SUFFRAGETTE

Ah! *Votes for Women!* Here! It is my mission
 To gather names to lengthen this petition.

PAINTER

[Aside.] She's not the kind that uses bricks and arson;
 She seems as harmless as a country parson.

SUFFRAGETTE

My stint is just a rod a day, remember.
 I hope to reach nine miles before December.

PAINTER

The larger the handwriting then the better?

PHILOSOPHER

I felt quite well disposed until I met her.
 In fact was waxing quite enthusiastic;
 But now I pause.

PAINTER

And now I grow sarcastic.

PHILOSOPHER

Why do you want the vote?

SUFFRAGETTE

It is our right.
 Women are just as good as men are!

PAINTER

Quite!

In fact superior in many features.
 I always have adored the charming creatures.

SUFFRAGETTE

Benighted man!

PAINTER

[*To the Philosopher.*] She speaks to you.

PHILOSOPHER

Sad fact,

The concrete contradicteeth the abstract.

[*A mysterious Figure in Black has entered, unnoticed, and taken a position at the back. The Figure now comes forward.*]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

Good friends! Here's silence and seclusion. Say,
Can you spare time to watch a little play?
This place, no doubt, you think a very strange one;
But if you'll sit, I think I can arrange one.

PAINTER

The ground is damp.

PHILOSOPHER

My joints are grown rheumatic.

SUFFRAGETTE

Go on! I'm in for anything dramatic.

[*The Painter, the Philosopher, and the Suffragette seat themselves at one side and watch what follows with deep interest, commenting here and there with characteristic gesture or conversation in dumb show.*]

The Figure in Black, both arms outstretched, makes a series of slow passes through the air with a wand taken from beneath its mantle.]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

Watch me. All living things this waving wand
Has power to summon over sea and land.

[*Three veiled figures in white flutter in.*]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

These three in white are souls before their birth.
I touch their eyes. Outspread they see the earth.

[The three figures with hands uplifted gaze out into vacancy as if they saw before them some wonderful vision.]

THE FIRST FIGURE IN WHITE

Oh!

THE SECOND FIGURE IN WHITE

Beautiful!

THE THIRD FIGURE IN WHITE

How beautiful!

[They draw lots from an urn which the Figure in Black presents.]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

All three

Have drawn America, "land of the free."

[The Figure motions them off. During the following, at the waving of the wand, a number of Gnomes bring in the properties for the next scene.]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

They're now in the bright world they saw below them.
Years pass. I'll warrant that you hardly know them.
In fact, I wonder if you'll think it's fair:
For one is married to a millionaire;
And one is poor; and one is—well, not rich.
You'll have no trouble telling which is which.

[The first of the three figures, now a pinched, prematurely-old Mill Girl, comes in with her dinner-pail, and standing at a table (at the right) begins a monotonous task of folding cloth. The work is of such a mechanical nature that her mind has no part in it; her fingers fly with automatic swiftness.]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

This is a mill. She is an employee.
The nature of her work you plainly see.
It did not take her long to grow proficient.

Her father's wages did not prove sufficient
 To feed the family. That's why she came.
 They took her out of school. (*It was a shame.*)
 Note these new comers. Mark each one by name.

[*Monotony, Bad Air, Dance Hall and Cheap Theatre come in. The first is a gaunt blind figure dressed in black. Bad Air, his wife, is a coughing, chalky-faced woman. They have a child, who seems almost inanimate, with them. Dance Hall and Cheap Theatre are a pair of flashily dressed youth, much resembling each other. They wear bright checked suits, vivid ties (one orange and one red), and straw hats far back on their heads; they are smoking cigarettes. One carries a large bunch of red roses; the other holds up a pair of theatre tickets.*]

MONOTONY

We are the ruling spirits of this place.
 Look at my eyes. Kindly inspect my face.
 See me beat time. I am Monotony.
 And I beat those who don't keep time with me.

[*He stands behind the Mill Girl. She folds to the rhythm of his beating. She does not see him, but she shudders involuntarily.*]

BAD AIR

I am Bad Air (sister of Lack of Light).

[*She blows in the Mill Girl's face. The latter coughs hollowly but does not see her.*]

BAD AIR

My business is to paint pink faces white.
 This is our youngest child . . .

MONOTONY

Little Fatigue.

[*They both point to their child, who has collapsed in a faint at their feet. Monotony stirs the little bundle of rags with his feet. He and his wife speak of her with a kind of ghoulisg gusto.*]

BAD AIR

Our others joined . . .

MONOTONY

. . . the Cemetery League!

BAD AIR

Except one girl at home . . .

MONOTONY

. . . her name's Consumption.

BAD AIR

To come with us . . .

MONOTONY

. . . she didn't have the gumption.

[*Monotony continues beating time; Bad Air goes on blowing in the Mill Girl's face.*]

DANCE HALL

My name is Dance Hall.

CHEAP THEATRE

I am called Cheap Theatre.

BOTH

Here at the factory door we've come to meet her.

We're rivals. [*They hug each other affectionately.*]

Just at six you'll hear the whistle.

DANCE HALL

[*Showing his roses.*] I think that this will fetch her.

CHEAP THEATRE

[*Showing his theatre tickets.*] I think this'll.

DANCE HALL

Come here Monotony.

CHEAP THEATRE

Come here Bad Air.

DANCE HALL

Give her the proper tip.

CHEAP THEATRE

I'll make it square.

DANCE HALL

When they are tired they are always easy.

CHEAP THEATRE

Say! don't you think this tie of mine is breezy?

[*Capital, a big-paunched, coarse type of business man, enters. He comes over and sits down near the Mill Girl, tipping lazily back in his chair, his legs up on the table where she is working. He puffs at a cigar, playing with his massive watch-chain and patting his stomach contentedly from time to time.*]

CAPITAL

My name is Capital. Don't think, I pray,
I'm here. I'm really many miles away.
My income is the profit from this factory—
A mode of life extremely satisfactory.
I have an arm that reaches across space.

[*He looks the other way.*]

My eyes, meanwhile, stay home, inside my face.
Hence, you perceive (a fact to feel no shame for)—
What I don't see, I cannot be to blame for.
Their interest in their work is most intent.
I take great interest also: twelve per cent.

[*He has reached across and taken a heavy money bag from under the table. He now unties it and thrusting in his hand lets it wallow in the gold, listening to the pleasant clink of one coin on another.*]

Though the Figure in Black now shifts the center of interest of the play, all through what follows Capital still sits there puffing his cigar, while Monotony goes on beating, beating, beating, and the Mill Girl folding, folding, folding.

As the Figure in Black waves the wand, the Gnomes, as before, bring in properties, after which the

Second Figure in White, now a careworn Mother, comes in and seats herself at a table near the center. She sews. There is a cradle near her which she rocks with her foot.]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

This place is *Home*. This woman is a *Mother*. She has four children. This one [*Indicating the cradle.*] is another.

If you watch here, as one by one, they come,
You'll see the things that tie her to her home.

[Each of the various figures that now enter, after making its speech, ties one end of a string to the Mother and keeping the other end in its hand, goes and sits down—till the Mother finally looks like a fly caught in a spider's web.]

A LITTLE BOY

I'm Tom!

A LITTLE GIRL

I'm Blanche!

ANOTHER LITTLE BOY

I'm Johnnie!

ANOTHER LITTLE GIRL

I am Alice!

[They smother their mother with kisses.]

ALL FOUR

She says we make home brighter than a palace.
But sometimes, when we worry her, she says
We are her pack of little nuisances.

A LITTLE GIRL

[Her face and hands are ashy and she shakes a cloud of dust from her clothes and hair.]
I'm Dust, and I sit down in every room.

A LITTLE BOY WITH A BROOM

And I come chasing after. I am Broom.

A LITTLE BOY WITH A BELL

I am Front Door Bell. I am always ringing.

ANOTHER LITTLE BOY WITH A BELL

I am Back Door Bell. I am always bringing
Her from her work.

A LITTLE GIRL WITH A HUGE FLATIRON

I'm Ironing.

A LITTLE GIRL DRESSED LIKE A SPOOL OF THREAD

*[Only her head, feet and arms protrude from the
spool. Her hat is a strawberry emery. She carries in
one hand a big thimble, in the other a huge needle.]*

I'm Mending.

A LITTLE BOY

*[His arms are loaded with a strange assortment
of objects: some preserving jars, a watering pot, a
broken picture, etc.; while behind him, like the tail of a
kite, trails a seemingly endless string to which other
objects of increasingly smaller size are attached.]*

I'm Little Odd Jobs. I am never ending.

A LITTLE BOY DRESSED LIKE A COOK

*[He is all in white and carries a huge loaf of
bread; the mouths of Tom, Blanche, Johnnie, and Alice
water at the sight.]*

I'm Baking. (You observe these children's wishes!)

A LITTLE GIRL WITH DISH PAN AND DISH MOP

And I'm those Everlasting Dirty Dishes.

A PALE YOUTH WITH A BIG BASKET

I'm Sickness. I have something in this basket
Which I'll exhibit to you if you ask it.

*[Out of the basket come six little children; the first
with bandaged neck, the next with very red face, the
next coughing violently, the next with face broken out,*

*the next holding on to its stomach, the last blowing his nose and sneezing.]**

FIRST CHILD

I'm Mumps.

SECOND CHILD

I'm Measles.

THIRD CHILD

I am Whooping Cough.

FOURTH CHILD

I'm Chicken Pox.

FIFTH CHILD

And I—you needn't scoff—

Am "Tummy Ache." I'm little but I'm bold.

SIXTH CHILD

And I am just an Ordinary Cold.

[Ordinary Cold goes over and blows in the baby's face.]

The next five Figures, instead of helping tie the Mother up, suspend the objects which they carry far out of her reach at the ends of five long fishing poles. The first carries a newspaper, the second a large placard, the third a miniature piano, the fourth and fifth, books.]

FIRST CHILD

I am the Paper she has never time for.

SECOND CHILD

And I'm the Lecture that there is no dime for.

*If this arrangement is too difficult, dolls appropriately "made up" may be substituted for the children, in which case Sickness will speak their lines for them. Or, a still different way, Sickness may carry a medicine-case instead of a basket and the children's diseases may be represented by bottles of medicine, pills, bandages, plasters, etc., as is appropriate. In this case the couplet will read:

I'm Sickness. I have things inside this case,
That frequently are called for in this place.

THIRD CHILD

I'm the Piano that they hoped to buy.
I'm Book she never reads.

FOURTH CHILD

And so am I.

A LITTLE NEGRESS

I am the Servant Problem. In all ages
I have vexed saints and sinners, fools and sages.
But I'm barred out here—by the father's wages;
That, and the cost of living.

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

Therefore, maidie,
You'd better come and plague this other lady.

[The reference is to the third figure in white, who, now transformed to a pampered Society Lady, has come in and sat down at a dressing table at the left. She gazes in a mirror, rearranging a lock of hair. (The Gnomes, as before, have brought in the properties.) Though the center of interest now shifts to her, the Mill Girl still continues her folding, on the right, and the Mother her sewing, in the center.]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

This is a Lady. And her name is Leisure.
You think she's free? No! She's the slave of pleasure.
Her residence (in winter) is the city.
She has no children. Isn't it a pity!
But other things she has in multiplicity.
For instance, him: Domestic Infelicity.

[The Figure in Black points over toward Capital, the Lady's husband. In the meantime, a child with a huge purse comes in and going over to Capital fills the purse with coins from his money bag.]

THE CHILD WITH THE PURSE

I am her Purse. You notice where I come from.
Observe my weight. Inside me there is some sum.

[The Child with the Purse, and each of her successors, goes over and ties herself to the Lady, just as did the children in the previous case. . . . A group of four children now come in, each one hidden, all but head and feet, behind the object that it carries; the first behind a fashion plate, the second behind a playing card, the third behind a paper-covered novel, the fourth behind a theatrical poster.]

FIRST LITTLE GIRL

Notice my stylish gown. My name is Fashion.
I am the idle woman's ruling passion.
Her time's her own. She thinks that she is free.
But she is fooled. She has to follow me.

FIRST LITTLE BOY

I'm Bridge. She courts me with a deep emotion.
The hours she gives to me would fill an ocean.

SECOND LITTLE GIRL

I'm Silly Novel.

SECOND LITTLE BOY

I am Inane Play.

SECOND LITTLE GIRL AND SECOND LITTLE BOY

We often help her while the hours away.

A LITTLE BOY DRESSED AS A BUTLER

[He brings in a turkey on a platter.]

Of all her friends I count myself the winner.
I'm always in her mind. My name is Dinner.

A LITTLE GIRL

[Hidden all but head and feet behind a full page newspaper advertisement.]

You think she's lazy? I can keep her hopping.
My name is Everlasting Senseless Shopping.

A LITTLE GIRL WHO DANCES IN IN A BALL GOWN

But it's my kind of "hop" that most she fancies.
I'm Tango—and the other Modern Dances.

A LITTLE GIRL IN BLACK

[Her eyes are downcast, her hands folded, her manner very demure.]

I'm Charity. I look good. But I'm bad.
She took me up because I was the fad.

A GUSHING LITTLE GIRL

[Her voice and manner are affected; her pronunciation absurdly over-precise.]

My name is Shallow Literary Babble.
I help supply the idle social gabble.
I frequent clubs and musical soirées.
My culture constantly elicits praise.
They say, though, that I cannot hold a candle
To my friend Gossip and her sister Scandal.

A LITTLE BOY

[Hidden, all but head and feet, behind a railroad time-table; and carrying a suit-case pasted over with labels.]

I beg you don't mistake me for a drummer.
I guide this lady to the shore in summer,
For her—a very strenuous occupation.
You recognize me, doubtless, as—Vacation.

A LITTLE BOY DRESSED AS A CHAUFFEUR

[He drags after him by a string a toy motor-car.]

My name is Motor Car. I travel. Where,
If I go rapidly, she doesn't care.
And so the more she rides around, the more
She finds herself just where she was before.

[A gaunt blind figure in black now enters, an exact replica of Monotony. He takes up a position behind the Lady corresponding to that of Monotony behind the Mill Girl.]

THE BLIND FIGURE

You notice my resemblance to another.
 There is a reason: I am his twin brother.
 I'm Boredom, and I follow close behind her.
 Whate'er she does to whisper and remind her
 She'll soon be sick of it. So, endlessly,
 She tries to find someone to murder me.
 But let 'em come, whomever she may send;
 I rule supreme; I'll get her in the end.

[The Lady shudders involuntarily.]

The Figure in Black goes over to the Painter, the Philosopher and the Suffragette; then, turning, points successively to the Mill Girl, to the Mother, to the Lady.]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

Look at the three; and can you longer quarrel
 Over the meaning or escape the moral?—
 A slave to Capital, to Home, to Pleasure.
 We need to scatter with more even measure
 Our Drudgery, our Motherhood, our Leisure.
 And with this observation ends the play.
 Is there no Woman Question? Look! and say!

[The play over, the Suffragette immediately rushes to make converts to her cause.]

SUFFRAGETTE

The Ballot! Let them *vote* and all their troubles
 Will vanish instantly like bursting bubbles.
 The *Vote!* I'll tell them so. Just watch and see!

PHILOSOPHER

The Vote! Then the Millenium! Q. E. D.

[The Painter, meanwhile, is going into a romantic ecstasy in front of the Mother. He places his canvas on his easel and prepares to paint her picture. The Philosopher, watching him, speaks in an undertone.]

PAINTER

Oh for a hundred hands

PHILOSOPHER

and fifty easels?

PAINTER

To paint a portrait

PHILOSOPHER

of the mumps and measles?

PAINTER

That might in some degree express the [*Hesitating
for a word.*]

PHILOSOPHER

frantic?

PAINTER

Emotions that possess my breast romantic!
Here would I picture "Motherhood"; sweet peace
Upon her brow; her brood about her knees.
I'd group them in a meadow. The blue sky;
Flowers around; a brook that babbles by.

PHILOSOPHER

Your picture, sir, would be a thumping lie!
[*The Painter now approaches the Mill Girl.*]

PAINTER

Here is a theme, too. This time not the wife.
But woman mingling in the world's great life.
I feel the vision warming all my blood—
Behold! "Emancipated Womanhood"!

CAPITALIST

Of such great paintings I should hate to rob
The world. And yet I have a little job. . . .
Frankly . . . I'd like to use your reputation
To bring my family before the nation.

I note it's quite the thing for men of "salary"
 To found a college or endow a gallery.
 So, when she shuffles off this mortal coil,
 I'd like to have my wife embalmed in—oil.
 Then, if I find you execute her duly
 I'll let you try your hand next on yours truly.
 So let *them* wait.

To make the matter plainer
 Here is five thousand as a small retainer.

[*The Painter pockets the retainer apparently with much pleasure, and sitting down before his easel begins painting the Lady.*]

PHILOSOPHER

[*To the Suffragette, who has been trying in vain to make converts to "the vote."*]
 How do you find 'em? Is "the vote" progressing?

SUFFRAGETTE

Their lack of interest is most depressing.

[*She points to the Mill Girl, the Mother, and the Lady in succession.*]

She says all *she* wants is a breath of air,
 And then, a nice young man to marry her.
 And *she*, to go to bed and feel that maybe
 She won't be waked up by a squalling baby.
She stopped her ears up so; wasn't that funny?

PHILOSOPHER

No vote for her. What she wants is *more money*.
 Her friend, moreover, Mrs. Fourteen Courses
 Is high up in the Anti-Suffrage forces.

SUFFRAGETTE

It's sad. I'd hoped to find at least one zealot.

PAINTER

It's plain. The Women do not *want* the ballot.

PHILOSOPHER

[*Indignant at the Painter's remark, pointing, with deep feeling, to the three figures.*]

Great Christopher! What chance, pray, have they got
To know whether they want the vote or not?

[*Turning, and speaking with more moderation to the Figure in Black.*]

Yet can you call this a fair presentation
Of woman's true position in our nation?
Surely not every woman is a slave!
Your play is guilty of omissions grave.
Here is the Toiler. Where's the Happy Worker
Of which the land boasts many? Here's the Shirker
And Parasite. In fairness why not tell
Of those with wealth who still can use wealth well—
And spend their leisure for the good of others?
Here is the Slave of Home. Where are the mothers
Who have, after the welcome household work is done,
Some hours in which to call their souls their own?

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

True! that there are such everyone agrees,
But—*where there's one of those there's ten of these.*

[*The Philosopher, pausing, considers this; at last, reluctantly, he is compelled to bow assent.*]

THE FIGURE IN BLACK

And there the hope lies to take courage from!
What the few are the many might become!

PHILOSOPHER

And shall become!

[*Seizing the Suffragette's banner, he points to the words "Votes for Women."*]

Words that, alone, are vanity,
Lit by these larger problems of humanity
Become the emblem of a mighty cause,

And *this* one of its flags. Let us not pause,
But in the name of Freedom hit the knavery
That is the root and sanction of this slavery;
Our watchwords two: *Intelligence* and *Bravery*!
Come on!

[*A new light has dawned in the eyes of the Suffragette. Her face grows suddenly beautiful; her movements graceful. All her harshness and awkwardness drop from her as by a miracle. Casting aside her petition, she comes over and takes her place by the Philosopher under the flag, "Votes for Women." The Painter shakes his head, laughs cynically, and whispers to the Capitalist. The Figure in Black, throwing back the hood that until now has half concealed the face beneath it, smiles mysteriously. The Suffragette perceiving a resemblance to another face, stands back in wonder, gazing.*]

[CURTAIN]



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